

*Chunking Method

Another way to paraphrase is to divide the original into groups of words, or “chunks,” and concentrate on explaining the meaning of each chunk. This can be especially helpful when you are working with longer passages. Here’s how *chunking* works.

1. Read the original passage several times to develop a basic understanding of the ideas.
2. Divide the passage into chunks by underlining main ideas.
 - As you divide the passage, focus on phrases rather than on individual words.
3. Explain each chunk using your own words.
4. Combine these explanations into one or more sentences to create a paraphrase.
 - As you combine these chunks, you will need to think about how the ideas are related to each other.
 - It is okay to rearrange these chunks into a new order for your paraphrase.

In the two examples below, the original sentences are divided into chunks. Each chunk is then explained in a new way. Finally, the chunks are combined to form a paraphrase.

Example 1:

Original: As the chain, [McDonald’s] expanded nationwide, in the

Chunk #1

mid-1960s, it sought to cut labor costs, reduce the number of

Chunk #2

Chunk #3

suppliers, and ensure that its fries tasted the same at every

Chunk #4

restaurant. McDonald’s began switching to frozen French

Chunk #5

fries in 1966—and few customers noticed the difference.

Chunk #6

Nevertheless, the change had a profound effect on the nation’s

Chunk #7

agriculture and diet. —Schlosser, Eric, “Why McDonald’s Fries Taste

Chunk #8

So Good” 2002

Rewordings of chunks:

1. McDonald's spread all over the country during the 1960s.
2. The company tried to spend less on its workers.
3. It got its supplies from fewer sources.
4. It wanted to guarantee that its French fries always tasted the same.
5. The company started using frozen French fries.
6. Not many people realized the change had been made.
7. But using frozen fries ultimately had a big influence.
8. It influenced U.S. farming and eating habits.

Paraphrase: Schlosser (2002) writes that while McDonald's spread all over

Chunk #1

the country during the 1960s, the company tried to spend less

Chunk #2

on its workers, get its supplies from fewer sources, and

Chunk #3

guarantee that its French fries always tasted the same. When

Chunk #4

the company started using frozen French fries, not many

Chunk #5

people realized the change had been made, but using frozen

Chunk #6

fries ultimately had a big influence on U.S. farming and

Chunk #7

Chunk #8

eating habits.

Example 2:

This example shows a paraphrase in which the chunks have been arranged in an order that is different from the original.

Original: There is an element of sacrifice and obligation: women are

Chunk #1

expected to make many things secondary once the husband

Chunk #2

comes along, to devote their energies to him and his house

Chunk #3

and the building of another family Unit. —Wark, Penny, "What

Does Life Tell Us About Love?" 2003

Activities to Practice Paraphrasing

To practice paraphrasing, do one or more of the following activities.



Identifying Problems in Paraphrases

Below are several paraphrases that have been created using the Chunking method. By yourself or with a partner, read the original sentences and then evaluate the paraphrases using the criteria for a good paraphrase on page 7. Circle OK or Not OK and give an explanation.

1. Original:

<u>The United States</u>	<u>leads the world in its belief in</u>	
Chunk #1	Chunk #2	Chunk #3
<u>romantic love—86 percent</u>	<u>of American college</u>	
Chunk #4	Chunk #5	Chunk #6
<u>students say they would not marry</u>	<u>without love.</u>	
	Chunk #7	Chunk #8

—Levine, Robert, “Is Love a Luxury?” 1993

Paraphrase: America is ahead in the world in its faith in dreamy love—three quarters of U.S. students in college declared they don’t want to marry without being in love (Levine, 1993).

OK Not OK

Explanation _____

2. Original:

<u>Countries are likely to indulge in romance if they are</u>	
	Chunk #1
<u>wealthy and value individualism over the community.</u>	
Chunk #2	Chunk #3

—Levine, Robert, “Is Love a Luxury?” 1993

Paraphrase 1: Rich, individual countries are more likely to think love is important (Levine, 1993).

OK Not OK

Explanation _____

Paraphrase 2: Countries that are rich and value individualism are more likely to believe in romantic love (Levine, 1993).

OK Not OK

Explanation _____

3. **Original:** There are not nearly as many divorces in this society

Chunk #1

[Indian] and I think it's because one doesn't expect to

Chunk #2

be nurtured and communicated with and understood every second of the day. —Wark, Penny, "What Does Life

Chunk #3

Tell Us About Love?" 2003

Paraphrase 1: Indian couples are less likely to get divorced because they do not expect caring and open communication from each other at all times (Wark, 2003).

OK Not OK

Explanation _____

Paraphrase 2: Indian husbands and wives don't require caring and open communication because divorce is not acceptable (Wark, 2003).

OK Not OK

Explanation _____

ACTIVITY 2

Chunking Practice

Use the Chunking method to paraphrase the following three sentences from the article "Ray Anderson," by Jennifer Beck in Part Two, Heroes, page 159. Use separate paper. You may work alone, with a partner, or in a group.

1. By combining environmentalism with dedication to his company's success, Anderson has proven that being green can also bring in the green for big business.
2. The book *The Ecology of Commerce* suggested that industry was systematically destroying the planet, and the only people in a position to stop the destruction were the industrialists themselves.
3. Almost immediately he [Anderson] began to turn Interface, Inc. [his company] into an environmentally friendly enterprise. He began by taking steps to reduce the company's waste and conserve energy by recycling.

ACTIVITY 3

Paraphrasing Proverbs

1. Working in a small group, think of a proverb familiar to you.
2. Take a few minutes for each group member to write a paraphrase of the proverb.
3. Read each person's paraphrase aloud and discuss each of the paraphrases using the criteria below:
 - It is close in meaning to the proverb.
 - No new ideas are added.
 - Important ideas are not deleted.